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Dr. Booker T. Washington's Impression

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
12 OF 14

ARKANSAS
BAPTIST
COLLEGE



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Letter from Booker T. Washington

December 30, 1911.

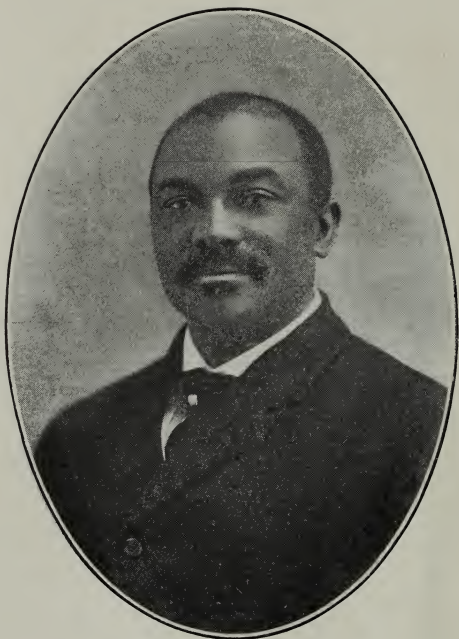
To Whom It May Concern:

I have for fifteen years or so been acquainted with the work of the Arkansas Baptist College at Little Rock, and its President, Dr. Joseph A. Booker. I have visited the school and am pleased to testify as to the effectiveness of the work being done there. Recently I examined a number of testimonials from prominent white persons of Little Rock and elsewhere concerning the Arkansas Baptist College. I found that all of these testimonials were agreed as to the excellent work that the institution is doing. I have also examined a somewhat extended statement of when and how the school was founded and its sources of support. I am particularly impressed with the fact that the Negroes of Arkansas have done so much for the Arkansas Baptist College; for I find by the report that they originally established the school and are now paying \$6,000.00 annually towards its support. I also find that the students of the school pay annually in board and tuition \$8,000.00 towards its support. Thus \$14,000.00 of the \$20,000.00 that is spent annually for running the school comes from the Negroes of the State. This is a notable example of self help. Such efforts deserve to be encouraged.

The Arkansas Baptist College is worthy of whatever financial assistance that may be accorded it.

Very sincerely,

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.



JOS. A. BOOKER

Now Serving His Twenty-fifth Year as
President of Arkansas Baptist College

Historical

ARKANSAS BAPTIST COLLEGE was organized in 1884, by the Negro Baptist Convention of Arkansas. Its first name was "Ministers' Institute," and was intended mainly for the training of Negro preachers in Arkansas, owing to the woeful ignorance then abounding in the Negro ministry of the State. In 1885, Rev. H. Woodsmall aided these people in having their school incorporated under the laws of Arkansas, in the name and style of "Arkansas Baptist College." Rev. Woodsmall was then a general missionary (white) under the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and took great interest in seeing that all the plans and papers were properly made for a great Negro school in the future. Although this school was organized under the auspices of a denomination, it makes no denominational test as a condition for advantages received at its hands. The main idea in the minds of the founders was, (1) That the race should form the habit of bearing its own educational burdens as far as possible; and (2) That the youth educated therein should have moral, industrial and religious training, along with the literary education received therein.

The school has been in operation for twenty-eight years successively. It had a new President every year for the first three years, but for the past twenty-four years (1911) President Jos. A. Booker has had charge of affairs. His success may be better seen than told.

The school at this time owns a valuable city property and a plant consisting of eighteen city lots, whereon have been erected two frame buildings, two brick buildings and the foundation for the third brick building, to be used as an industrial building for girls. There has just been completed also on the grounds a modern stone and brick building known as "Alumni Cottage," and used as a President's home. All these five buildings named are pretty well furnished and equipped for the purpose for which they were built. The school also owns a tract of land comprising 100 acres and located about four miles from the northern limits of North Little Rock, on the main line of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railroad. Students and hired labor have cleared and fenced about fifty acres of this land and that much is being cultivated every year as an industrial farm and as a material resource for the institution. It has been improved further by the establishment of a country postoffice, a tenant house, a large modern barn and a steam gin. During the ginning season of 1911-1912, more than one hundred fifty bales of cotton were ginned out for the colored and white people of that community. This farm could be made a fine future home for the college and thus enable it to overcome the present hindrances of city life. But even as a mere industrial center and material resource it can be made immeasurably helpful to the community and to the students so badly needing agricultural training.

The college has sent out nearly three hundred graduates from its academic, collegiate, theological, musical and industrial departments. Besides, thousands of un-



Girls' Dormitory and Main Building

der-graduates are filling places of usefulness as leaders and followers in the world's work. These graduates and under-graduates can be found in many States of America, in Mexico, Panama, Cuba, Philippine Islands and in Africa. They are teaching, preaching, practicing law, practicing medicine, keeping shops, running farms and building creditable homes. There are enrolled every year in the school more than four hundred students regularly classified in all departments, from fifty counties in Arkansas and seven contiguous States. Eighteen teachers, secretaries, printers and heads of departments are engaged daily from year to year, and their entire salaries do not amount to ten thousand dollars a year all told. This particular fact goes to show that the school could not be a possibility but for the noble sacrificing spirit of all the work-

ers. The teachers employed have come from such schools as Roger Williams University, Shaw University, Hampton Institute, Tuskegee Institute, et al.

It costs in round numbers twenty thousand dollars a year to maintain and operate Arkansas Baptist College. Of this sum the Negro constituency in the State contribute six thousand dollars a year; the students pay in tuition three thousand dollars a year; in board five thousand dollars a year. The American Baptist Home Mission Society contributes one thousand one hundred dollars a year. The Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society of Chicago contributes four hundred dollars a year. The John F. Slater Fund contributes seven hundred fifty dollars a year. The deficit of three thousand five hundred dollars, more or less, is usually met by time loans against the collections of the ensuing year. This sort of ebb and flow in the business conduct of the institution is a considerable hindrance to the larger life and growth of the school. This can be remedied only by generous contributions from outside friends that are more able than these people who have done so much to found, maintain and operate the school thus far.

The school plant proper is worth seventy-five thousand dollars. The farm is easily worth seven thousand five hundred dollars. There is a mortgage debt over the city property to the amount of fifteen thousand dollars. The interest on the mortgage debt has much to do with the size of the annual deficit, and stands greatly in the way of the much needed material improvement from year to year. As hard as these people have labored to support the



Boys' Dormitory

school and cancel this mortgage, they could be induced and stimulated to renew their efforts and wipe their mortgage debt in a year or two if some one would hold out a conditional gift of ten thousand dollars, more or less, with that end in view. Such has been the course taken with most of the other schools, north and south, white and colored, and it would form a new rallying point for the Negroes of Arkansas.

It has been conceded by many that this school is one of the finest examples of Negro self help in educational work in all the South. For these people pay fully ninety per cent of its cost of operation and one hundred per cent of the purchase price of their property. Most of them willingly and gladly pay their children's board and tuition as regularly as the months roll around. They do not only deserve a nice little lift, but they would highly appreciate it.

JOS. A. BOOKER, President.

Letters from Prominent White Men

FROM THE MAYOR OF LITTLE ROCK.

Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 11, 1911.

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that I have known the Rev. J. A. Booker for some years, and will say that he is doing a very noble work, and I think him a man of fine character and principle.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) CHAS. E. TAYLOR,
Mayor City of Little Rock.

FROM A TEXAS RELIGIOUS EDITOR.

Dallas, Tex., Nov. 28, 1911.

To Whom It May Concern:

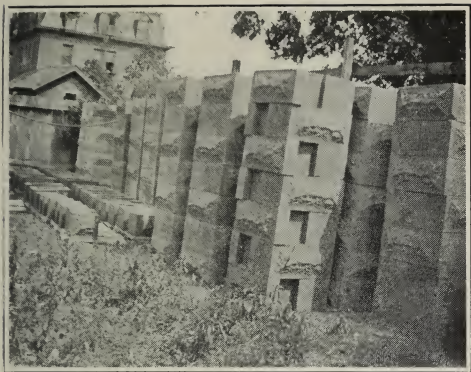
It gives me very great pleasure to say an earnest word concerning the work President Jos. A. Booker is doing for the Negroes of Arkansas in the Arkansas Baptist College. President Booker stands well with all classes of people who know him as a man of strength, sane judgment, integrity and zeal in his work. Any assistance given him in any way will be worthily bestowed.

(Signed) J. R. GAMBRELL,
Editor Baptist Standard.

FROM SECRETARY EDUCATIONAL BOARD.

Waco, Texas, Nov. 16, 1911.

President Jos. A. Booker, of the Arkansas Baptist College, of Little Rock, Ark., advises me that you desire testimonials concerning him and his work from some



Piles of Concrete Blocks Made on College
Grounds for Alumni Cottage

“prominent white people in the South,” and requests that I write you. Without acknowledging the correctness of his views in putting me in that class, which he doubtless does because of my known friendship for him and his work, as well as for my own interest in the work of evangelization and education among the Negro race throughout the South, I take pleasure in saying that I endorse and approve most heartily the work that he is doing. I am a native of Arkansas, and at one time reside for five or six years in Little Rock. My residence was in the same general section of the city in which was situated the college. This gave me a good opportunity to study at close range President Booker and the work of the school. I regard him as, in every way, a worthy Christian man and a faithful and efficient administrator, and an influential leader among his people.

The deportment of the student body, as I had opportunity to observe the same, was always quiet and well behaved. The spirit of the institution is genuinely Christian and its methods are thoroughly sane and practical. The influence of such an institution can only be good, both upon the Negro race and upon all nationalities as they affect one another in their inter-dependence and mutual relations.

I do not know what your purpose is, but I presume that possibly you are thinking of aiding the school in a financial way. If so, I should say, unhesitatingly, that in my judgment every dollar put there will be a safe investment that will bring back large dividends in the advancement of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) A. J. BARTON,
Cor. Secretary Education Board, Baptist
General Convention of Texas.

FROM A PROMINENT MERCHANT.

Portland, Ark., Nov. 15, 1911.

My Dear Sir:

I have known Prof. Joseph A. Booker, President of the Arkansas Baptist College, since childhood. I used to set him copies when he was a boy, and I noticed in early life that he was very studious, and I saved old papers and other literature for him to read. The first account he ever made he made with me, and by hard work he saved up money enough, with the assistance of both white and colored friends, to educate himself, and after obtaining his education, he began this great work of building this well-known colored Baptist College in Little Rock. This work has proved to be a phenomenal success, and is therefore very gratifying to both white and col-



Concrete Blocks Used in Constructing
Alumni Cottage

ored people of the State. I know of no institution in the State, regardless of color, that deserves more credit than the said college. Prof. Booker visits his old home about once a year, and every one is glad to see him. I predict if he lives ten years longer he will be at the head of one of the best colored colleges in the South.

Respectfully,
(Signed) J. C. BAIN.

FROM SOUTHERN TRUST COMPANY.

Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 20, 1911.

To Whom It May Concern:

I desire to say that I am, and have been for years, familiar with the work being done by the Arkansas Baptist College, of which Jos. A. Booker is President, and it is my opinion that he is doing a great work for the Negroes. He is teaching them that industry and honesty must go hand in hand with the developing of in-

telligence, and in that way he is accomplishing much.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) W. M. KAVANAUGH,
President Southern Trust Company.

FROM EDITOR DAILY GAZETTE.

Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 18, 1911.

To Whom It May Concern:

I take great pleasure in endorsing the work of the Arkansas Baptist College, of its President, Joseph A. Booker, who puts into his educational work that necessary amount of common sense which seems lacking in too many college presidents, white as well as Negroes. I think it is largely due to such men as President of the Arkansas Baptist College that the Negro in Arkansas is so well treated and is respected for his thrift and industry.

(Signed) FRED HEISKELL,
Managing Editor, Arkansas Gazette.

FROM LONOKE SCHOOL BOARD.

Jos. A. Booker, President Arkansas Baptist College, Little Rock, Ark.

Dear Sir:

I regret very much that I have not been able to visit your school and examine your work personally, but I feel it a duty, as well as a pleasure, to write this letter of endorsement of the class of work which I know you are doing. I think that you have one of the best regulated and one of the most practical institutions of learning for the education of the colored people in the Southwest.

Yours truly,
(Signed) W. P. FLETCHER,
President.



Alumni Cottage—Completed by Students

FROM WHITE BAPTIST COLLEGE.

President Joseph A. Booker, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Dear Brother:

I have your letter asking for a statement of my opinion of your work in the Arkansas Baptist College. I may say that I lived within two blocks of your school building for several years, and I was very much impressed with the quiet orderliness of the boys and girls attending your school.

I had one of your students in your school as a servant for a long time, and I found him to be a good servant and thoroughly honorable. During his stay in my home he reflected something of the class of work that is being done by your institution. I believe that you are doing a great work for your people in Arkansas.

I have not definite knowledge of your school room work, but where I have met the students of your school, they have been quiet, honorable, energetic men and

women. I wish for you the greatest success in your undertaking.

Yours fraternally,

(Signed) R. G. BOWERS,
President Ouachita Baptist College, Arkad-
delphia, Ark.

FROM EX-STATE SENATOR.

To Whom It May Concern:

I take pleasure in saying that I have known Rev. J. A. Booker, the President of the Arkansas Baptist College, for a number of years—15 or 20—and have visited his school. He is a man of marked ability, of excellent culture and is a Christian gentleman. His ideas of education for his race are in keeping with those of Booker T. Washington and other leading colored men, and harmonize perfectly with the best sentiment of the South. A Southerner myself, and an ex-Confederate soldier, I am clearly of opinion that with such men as he at the front there could not be any race question in the land. Those who are able to help him financially can in my opinion do no wiser thing.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) JNO. G. B. SIMMS,
Ex-State Senator 15th District.

FROM LITTLE ROCK BOARD OF TRADE.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to state that Rev. Joseph A. Booker, President of the Arkansas Baptist College, is one of the foremost educators of the South. He is a high-class man and stands A-one in this community. His school is really what he states it is on his letterheads—Industrial, Literary, Religious, Economical, Thorough, Practical.



Manual Training—Boys Building Lattice Corner

Reverend Booker deserves every consideration at the hands of those that feel liberally inclined towards aiding a worthy institution. I most cheerfully commend him and his school.

Yours very truly,
 (Signed) H. L. REMMEL,
 President Board of Trade.

Prof. Joseph A. Booker, President Arkansas Baptist College, City.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of November 11, in regard to request of Dr. C. L. White, of New York City, relative to letter of commendation, has my attention. I wish that I had an opportunity to talk to Dr. White personally my opinion of your work. It is very difficult to properly convey by means of a letter one's opinion on a subject of this kind.

I know from years of observation the successful results of your earnest efforts. We of Little Rock realize far better than it is possible for an outsider to do. We

congratulate you on your success and would be glad if you would ask Dr. White to send us any question to which he desires answers, and it will be a pleasure to communicate with him.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) GEO. R. BROWN,
Secretary Little Rock Board of Trade.

FROM ENGLAND NATIONAL BANK.

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to state that I have known Prof. Jos. A. Booker and the Arkansas Baptist College, with which he is connected, for the past ten years. Prof. Booker, through his college, is doing a fine work for the Negro race in Arkansas. He stands high with all classes, both white and black, and his word is considered as good as his bond.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. E. ENGLAND, Jr.,
Cashier.

FROM FIRST (WHITE) BAPTIST CHURCH.

To Whom It May Concern:

Ever since I came to Little Rock, as pastor of the First Baptist Church, in June, 1897, I have watched with a great deal of interest the progress of the Arkansas Baptist College, and have been forcibly and favorably impressed with the grace, grit and gumption of its faithful President, Joseph A. Booker.

In my judgment he is one of the greatest colored men of our land.

Sincerely,

(Signed) BEN COX.

**FROM AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK,
FORT SMITH, ARK.**

It affords me much pleasure to commend to you Rev. Jos. A. Booker, President of the Arkansas Baptist College, of Little Rock.

Dr. Booker has done a remarkably successful work with his college among his people. He is a man of very high standing among the Baptists of this State, and also among other denominations where he is known.

Personally, I regard him as being a very strong man, of splendid ability in his line, and I have been informed by the pastor of my church that he also stands very high spiritually, and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (white) heartily endorses and supports his work.

I cheerfully commend him to you as being absolutely worthy of any confidence that may be reposed in him.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) P. A. BALL, Cashier.

FROM GOVERNOR DONAGHEY.

To Whom It May Concern:

I take pleasure in stating that, from what I have heard, President Joseph A. Booker, of the Arkansas Baptist College, is doing a splendid work in his line towards educational advancement and moral uplifting of his race in this section.

Very respectfully,
(Signed) G. W. DONAGHEY,
Governor.



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